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ORGI Chamber of  
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# 'Vicious' CIA media attacks deplored by director Bush

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KENNEBUNK — Public relations, countering the "reckless and groundless allegations that constantly plague us" is one of the key problems now facing the Central Intelligence Agency, said CIA director George Bush in an interview with the Journal.

Irresponsible and sensational reporting, overzealous investigation, and misguided attempts on the part of some to destroy the intelligence capability of the United States have all contributed to the current myths and misconceptions about the CIA, the director told a largely sympathetic audience of Kennebunk-Kennebunkport Chamber of Commerce members at a dinner here Wednesday.

He referred to a recent article in "Playboy" magazine that links the CIA with the ouster of Nixon, the movie, "Seven Days of the Condor," that portrays a CIA running amuck and controlling every aspect of citizens' lives, to such "absurd" allegations that the CIA controls the "New York Times" and contributed to

Thomas Dewey's election campaign a year before the CIA was founded.

The CIA is not what it appears to be, indicated Bush — an ironic position, some would say, for an organization which regularly deals with the "what is" and "what seems to be."

Bush said the misconceptions created by these types of media portrayals "complicate the functions of the director and of the CIA."

"This kind of vicious portrayal does no good to our basic national interest," he said in his impassioned defense of the CIA's role.

He stressed there is now more than sufficient oversight of the CIA — that seven congressional committees go over the CIA budget in "infinite detail."

Bush declined to divulge the CIA's budget, saying to do so would reveal too much about the CIA's international operations and information sources. "Give me a copy of the KGGB (Russian intelligence agency budget) and I'll tell you what they are doing — it would be extremely useful and I'd love to have it," he

said. Secrecy and "grubby" operations are vital, he added.

Conceding there have been CIA abuses of power in the past — notably the plot to assassinate Cuba's Fidel Castro — Bush said steps have been taken to prevent such recurrence.

He cited greater safeguards protecting individual rights, the streamlining of the CIA's administrative operations, new oversight power, and, notably, the full cooperation of the U.S. Congress.

"In spite of being battered, I think the CIA is vibrant and strong, and I hope it responds to the needs of America, and I believe it is."

"We ought not to be tarred with a brush that is phony and devious," the director told the Journal. Hotly denying published allegations, Bush asserted: "They just aren't true." He claimed that never has the CIA itself been contacted for verification of these "wild" accounts in the national media.

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